

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 EA-07 ISO-00 SSO-00 NSCE-00 USIE-00
INRE-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-01 INR-07 L-03
NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 ACDA-07
TRSE-00 AF-10 OMB-01 IO-13 AID-05 OES-06 ERDA-05
NRC-05 /121 W

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O R 301145Z APR 77
FM AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 3080
INFO AMCONGEN BOMBAY
AMCONGEN CALCUTTA
AMEMBASSY DACCA
AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD
AMEMBASSY KATHMANDU
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMCONGEN MADRAS
AMEMBASSY MOSCOW - MCN PENDING
USLO PEKING
CINCPAC

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 NEW DELHI 6222

CINCPAC FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652 GDS
TAGS: PFOR, IN, UR
SUBJECT: THE GROMYKO VISIT: AN EXERCISE IN CONTINUITY

REF: (A) NEW DELHI 6104; (B) NEW DELHI 6115 (NOTAL)
(C) NEW DELHI 6035

SUMMARY: IN THE INDIAN VIEW THE GROMYKO VISIT WAS A
SUCCESS AND UNDERScoreD THE CONTINUITY OF INDIA FOREIGN
POLICY. THE TALKS COVERED INTERNATIONAL ISSUES INCLUD-
ING ASIAN SECURITY, DISARMAMENT, THE INDIA OCEAN, THE
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MIDDLE EAST, AND SOUTH AFRICA. THE VISIT ILLUSTRATES
THE IMPORTANCE THE GOI ATTACHES TO GOOD RELATIONS WITH
THE USSR. A FINAL APPRECIATION OF THE VISIT FOLLOWS BY
SEPTTEL.

1. THE ACTING POLITICAL COUNSELOR HAD AN HOUR LONG
DISCUSSION APRIL 29 WITH MEA JOINT SECRETARY

PURUSHOTTAM (EAST EUROPE), AND HIS STAFFER AND THE GOI INTERPRETER FOR VISIT, MAHDU OAK, CONCERNING THE APRIL 25 THROUGH 27 OFFICIAL VISIT BY THE SOVIET FOREIGN MINISTER. PURUSHOTTAM TOOK THE LEAD IN SETTING FORTH THE INDIAN VERSION, ALTHOUGH HE LOOKED TO OAK FOR OCCASIONAL CORROBORATION. THE FOLLOWING ARE THE JOINT SECRETARY'S VIEWS UNLESS OTHERWISE LABELED:

2. BACKGROUND FOR THE VISIT: THE INDIAN FOREIGN MINISTER RENEWED THE PREVIOUS GOVERNMENT'S INVITATION TO GROMYKO IN AN EARLY CONTACT WITH THE SOVIETS, (PRESUMABLY DURING HIS MARCH 30 MEETING WITH AMBASSADOR MALTSEV HERE SHORTLY AFTER TAKING OFFICE). THE SOVIETS RESPONDED WITH AN ALACRITY WHICH SURPRISED THE GOI. THE VISIT WAS SOMEWHAT DIFFICULT TO ARRANGE, SINCE FOREIGN MINISTER VAJPAYEE'S APRIL SCHEDULE WAS SO FULL.

3. AMBIENCE: BOTH SIDES APPROACHED THE TALKS WITH A RESIDUE OF CRITICISM EACH HAD EXPRESSED FOR THE OTHER. THE SOVIETS IN THE SIXTIES HAD CALLED MORARJI DESAI "RIGH WING REACTIONARY". HARSHER THINGS WERE SAID IN THE SOVIET PRESS ABOUT VAJPAYEE. THE TWO INDIAN PRINCIPALS IN TURN HAVE A HISTORY OF FREQUENT ATTACKS ON THE SOVIET UNION. AS THE VISIT BEGAN, ONE OF THE CONCLUSIONS THAT BECAME CLEAR ALMOST IMMEDIATELY WAS THAT BOTH PARTIES WANTED TO FORGET THE PAST. THERE WAS NEVER ANY MENTION OF EARLIER INSULTS. OLD POSITIONS WERE TACITLY BUT TRANSPARENTLY IGNORED.

4. RAPPORT: VAJPAYEE QUICKLY DEMONSTRATED TO HIS SOVIET COUNTERPART

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A SOLID GRASP OF INTERNATIONAL ISSUES AND WON GROMYKO'S RESPECT. THE TWO MEN DEVELOPED A RAPPORT, EVEN AN "UNDERSTANDING", DURING THE THREE DAYS OF CONTACT, AND THIS IS IMPORTANT FOR THE FUTURE OF THE BILATERAL RELATIONSHIP.

5. THE SIGNING OF THE THREE AGREEMENTS UNDERSCORES THE CONTINUITY OF THE INDO-SOVIET RELATIONSHIP. THE AGREEMENTS ARE NOT PARTICULARLY NEW, BUT THE GOI REGARDED IT AS SIGNIFICANT THE SOVIETS PROPOSED THEY BE SIGNED DURING THE GROMYKO STAY. WHILE IN A SENSE THE AGREEMENTS REPRESENT THE TANGIBLE ASPECT OF THE VISIT, THE ESSENTIAL PURPOSE WAS THE EXCHANGE OF VIEWS WHICH TOOK PLACE. ON THE REGIONAL INTERNATIONAL SCENE, BOTH SIDES PRESENTED THEIR VIEWS ON PAKISTAN, CHINA AND BANGLADESH. THERE WAS NO PRECISE AGREEMENT BUT RATHER A CLEAR UNDERSTANDING OF EACH OTHER'S VIEWS. OTHER INTERNATIONAL PROBLEMS WERE ALSO DISCUSSED.

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6. AT THIS POINT POLCOUNS QUESTIONED SEVERAL ASPECTS
OF THE JOINT COMMUNIQUE (REFTEL A) WITH PURUSHOTTAM
COMMENTING AS FOLLOWS:

A. ASIAN SECURITY. THE FORMULATION WAS ALONG
STANDARD LINES, BUT CONDENSED. REFERENCE TO "COMMON
EFFORT BY ALL THE STATES OF THIS....AREA...." IS OMITTED.
THIS WAS NOT INSIGNIFICANT, CONVERSELY CARE SHOULD BE
TAKEN NOT TO ATTACH TOO MUCH IMPORTANCE TO THE OMISSION.
(THE MESSAGE HERE SEEMED TO BE THAT THE GOI IS TELLING
US IT HAS IN FACT EDGED AWAY FROM THE SOVIET POSITION
ON COLLECTIVE SECURITY, BUT EVER SO SLIGHTLY AND DOES
NOT WISH TO BOAST ABOUT IT.) IN PAST SESSIONS THE SOVIETS
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WERE ADAMANT ON ASIAN COLLECTIVE SECURITY FORMULATIONS. AT TIMES GOI NEGOTIATORS WERE FORCED TO BE BLUNT IN REJECTING SOVIET SUGGESTIONS. ON THIS OCCASION THE SOVIETS WERE MORE FLEXIBLE.

B. DISARMAMENT: THE GOI WAS PREPARED TO INCLUDE ALMOST ANY LANGUAGE ON DISARMAMENT THAT THE SOVIETS WISHED. THE LANGUAGE IS HORTATORY, AND REALLY DOES NOT HAVE MUCH SUBSTANCE. AS THE COMMUNIQUE WAS TAKING SHAPE, HOWEVER, THE DISARMAMENT LANGUAGE BECAME SO LENGTHY THAT IT APPEARED TO BE A SEPARATE RESOLUTION IN ITSELF. IT WAS THEREFORE CONDENSED. GROMYKO SEEMED ALMOST PREOCCUPIED BY THE SUBJECT, AND REPEATEDLY MADE POINTS ABOUT THE BURDEN OF ARMS EXPENDITURES. (PURUSHOTTAM ADDED THAT IN HIS PERSONAL VIEW, THE SOVIETS WERE EITHER ON THE DEFENSIVE BECAUSE OF THE US PROPOSALS ADVANCED BY SECRETARY VANCE AT MOSCOW, OR WERE ATTEMPTING TO CONVEY TO THEIR OWN PEOPLE, USING THE TALKS HERE AS A VEHICLE, THE COMPELLING NEED FOR A SIGNIFICANT DISARMAMENT STEP.) THE GOI WAS PLEASED TO ACCOMMODATE THE SOVIETS ON THE DISARMAMENT PORTIONS OF THE COMMUNIQUE. THE LANGUAGE DOES NOT REFLECT ANY CHANGE IN THE GOI POSITION ON DISARMAMENT AS SET FORTH MOST RECENTLY IN THE LAST SESSION OF THE CCD. (PURUSHOTTAM SAID GROMYKO REPORTED ON THE SALT TALKS WITH VANCE. PURUSHOTTAM DID NOT ELABORATE FURTHER EXCEPT TO ADD THAT HE GAINED THE IMPRESSION THAT THE SOVIETS WERE DEEPLY CONCERNED BY THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE CRUISE MISSILE.)

C. INDIAN OCEAN. THE SOVIETS INDICATED THEY WERE PREPARED TO DISCUSS THE "DEMILITARIZATION" OF THE INDIAN OCEAN. WHEN ASKED PRECISELY WHAT THE SOVIETS MEANT, PURUSHOTTAM SAID THE SOVIETS WERE READY TO DISCUSS THE ELIMINATION OF "FOREIGN BASES" AND THE PRESENCE--PERMANENT STATIONING--OF NON-LITTORAL STATES' WARSHIPS IN THE INDIAN OCEAN. HE PARRIED A REFERENCE TO BERBERA BY NOTING THE SOVIETS SAY THEY HAVE A "FACILITY"

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(I.E. IN DISTINCTION TO A "BASE") THERE.

D. MIDDLE EAST AND SOUTH AFRICA: THE SOVIETS SEEMED TO BE MORE EVEN HANDED IN ASSESSING THE ARAB-ISRAELI CONFRONTATION THAN EARLIER. GROMYKO TOOK THE POSITION THAT IT IS FOR THE ARABS TO DETERMINE WHAT FORM OF REPRESENTATION THE PLO SHOULD HAVE AT GENEVA. BUT BOTH THE PLO AND THE ISRAELIS HAVE TO ADMIT THE OTHER EXISTS. THERE IS NO OTHER PATH TO PEACE, THE SOVIET MINISTER REPORTEDLY SAID. ON SOUTH AFRICA THE TWO PARTIES WERE IN COMPLETE AGREEMENT: ARMED STRUGGLE MAY BE NECESSARY AS A LAST RESORT.

7. PURUSHOTTAM LAMELY PARRIED POLITICAL COUNSELOR'S QUERY AS TO WHETHER THE INDIANS WERE SURPRISED BY GROMYKO'S THINLY VEILED PUBLIC CRITICISM OF THE US (REFTEL C). HE ADDED THAT SUCH CRITICISMS HAD NOT COME UP IN THE OFFICAL TALKS.

8. COMMENT: IN THE INDIAN VIEW THE GROMYKO VISIT WAS CLEARLY A SUCCESS. PURUSHOTTAM IN EFFECT SAID THE TALKS UNDERSCORED THE CONTINUITY OF INDIAN FOREIGN POLICY, ENABLED THE TWO FOREIGN MINISTERS TO ESTABLISH A DEGREE OF RAPPORT, AND PERMITTED THE TWO PARTIES TO DEAL WITH ONE ANOTHER WITHOUT REFERENCE TO EARLIER RECRIMINATIONS. THE TALKS ALSO INDICATE THE IMPORTANCE THE GOI ATTACHES TO MAINEENANCE OF GOOD RELATIONS WITH THE USSR. THE EXPLANATION OFFERED BY ANOTHER MEA OFFICIAL TO A EUROPEAN DIPLOMAT WAS THAT INDIA GETS MORE FROM THE SOVIET UNION THAN THE U.S. WE ARE PREPARING AS ASSESSMENT OF THE GROMYKO VISIT FOR LATER TRANSMISSION. SCHNEIDER

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